



Fit Facts Exercise for Health



Introduction

What does it mean to be physically fit? The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has defined physical fitness as a set of characteristics (i.e., the work capacity of your heart and lungs, the strength and endurance of your muscles, and the flexibility of your joints) that relate to your ability to perform physical activities. Regular physical activity leads to improved physical fitness and many other physiologic, cosmetic, and psychological benefits. Depending on personal goals and job requirements the level of physical fitness to attain can range from basic, health-related to more specific, performance-related fitness

In the military, physical fitness is emphasized because of its role in military readiness and force health protection. Many jobs in the Navy require personnel to handle heavy equipment, to adapt quickly to harsh environments, and to work in limited quarters. Training for these situations ensures that you are physically able to perform these tasks repeatedly, without fail, whenever the need arises.

Fitness, which has been defined as the matching of an individual to his physical and social environment, has two basic goals: health and performance [which lie on a continuum]. Physical fitness requirements in the military consist of a basic level of overall fitness required for health of all individuals and a higher level of fitness that is required for the performance of occupational activities.

There are four basic components in all physical fitness programs.

- Frequency of exercise
- Intensity of the exercise
- Time spent exercising, and the type of activity

This is called the FITT principle guidelines. **FITT = Frequency, Intensity, Time & Type.**

Recommended Exercise Sequence

A warm-up gradually increases muscle temperature, metabolism, and blood flow to prepare you for exercise and lengthen short, tight muscles. Warm-up for at least 5 minutes before exercise.

1. Warm-Up
2. Stretch
3. Physical Activity Session
4. Cool-Down
5. Stretch

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A cool-down is important because it may help reduce muscle soreness after your workout. Cool-down for at least 5 minutes by exercising at a light pace using the same muscles just exercised.

Rest is an exceedingly important factor in recovery from strenuous workouts. A hard workout day should be followed by an easy workout day or complete rest to give your body time to fully recover.

Benefits of Cardiorespiratory Exercise

The benefits of cardiorespiratory, or aerobic, conditioning includes: _ A stronger heart and lower resting heart rate. Fitness and performance benefits, such as increased aerobic capacity and muscle endurance. Health benefits, such as maintenance of a healthy body weight and body fat percentage, management of stress, and decreased blood cholesterol and fat (triglycerides) levels. Increased performance in physically demanding jobs such as lift-and-carries. Increased muscle tone and enhanced physical appearance.

The basis of cardiorespiratory training is to place greater demands on the heart (e.g., make the heart beat more times per minute) than what is required during rest. This results in a stronger heart that can pump more blood and deliver more oxygen to the body per heartbeat, and a lower resting heart rate. Since most daily activities are aerobic in nature, improving the delivery of oxygen to the muscles will improve your work performance. So, view your heart as an aerobic muscle that must be conditioned for optimum functional health and fitness throughout your life.

Aerobic Exercise Guidelines

- Frequency 3 to 7 days per week
- Intensity 60% to 90% of your maximum heart rate
- Time 30 to 60 minutes per day with your target heart rate
- Type continuous, low resistance, high repetition activities

How can I find my target heart rate?

Use your fingertips, not your thumb, to find your pulse at your wrist below your thumb. Count the beats for 10 seconds. Multiply this number by 6 to get your heart rate in beats per minute (bpm).

Age-Predicted Max HR = $220 - \text{your age}$ = _____ bpm.

60% max HR = _____ max HR $\times 0.60$ = _____ bpm.

90% max HR = _____ max HR $\times 0.90$ = _____ bpm.

Target HR Zone = _____ to _____ bpm.

Remember, if you are just starting an exercise program consult with your doctor and start slow.

For more information on this and other health and wellness topics, visit
Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) at <http://www.nko.navy.mil> or the
Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) at <http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp>.